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FROM THE COEUR D'ALENE PRESS

No new education news stories posted online today.

FROM THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

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FROM THE MOSCOW PULLMAN DAILY NEWS (PASSWORD REQUIRED)

Science requirement bumped to 2013 ISAT

Moscow school officials relieved by state board's decision
By Halley Griffin, Daily News staff writer

Posted on: Saturday, December 06, 2008

Moscow School District officials are breathing a sigh of relief after the Idaho State Board of Education voted Thursday to postpone the science portion of the Idaho Standards Achievement Test as a graduation requirement.

Superintendent Candis Donicht said she was relieved by the decision.

"We are very happy that this isn't being implemented in 2012, though some folks would prefer that this was not implemented at all," Donicht said. "That will make time for a great deal of preparation that needs to be done before the test is implemented."

Districts across the state were alarmed when a discussion of the implementation deadline appeared on the board of education's November agenda.

School officials previously believed the class of 2013 would be the first required to pass the science ISAT in order to graduate, and were preparing teachers and students under that timeline.

The Legislature passed a temporary requirement last year that the test would be a graduation requirement beginning in 2012. The board of education initially extended the deadline to 2013, where it stayed until November.

Moscow school administrators raised a ruckus, saying 2012 was too soon and the requirement was setting students up to fail.

The board of education opened the issue to debate after receiving letters and phone calls about the matter.

Donicht said the district received a call from board of education Executive Director Mike Rush on Thursday informing them the deadline had been bumped back to 2013.

"Apparently the state board received over 80 letters," Donicht said.

The board of education determined in 2004 that every Idaho sophomore will have to pass the 10th-grade ISAT in reading, math and language usage. At that time there were only three tests, but the state has since added science in fifth, seventh and tenth grades.

Tenth-graders currently aren't required to pass the science ISAT to graduate.

Halley Griffin can be reached at (208) 882-5561, ext. 239, or by

Moscow schools: Scheduling conflicts

Moscow administrators, school board trying to find best class schedules for junior high school, high school students

By Halley Griffin, Daily News staff writer

Posted on: Saturday, December 06, 2008

Ava Powell had been in band since third grade.

She was forced to give it up this year so she could work an advanced placement English class into her schedule.

"That was rough," said the Moscow High School senior.

Powell is one of many Idaho public school students who have to make tough choices between required classes and the subjects they love.

She's also an example of the situation Moscow school officials want to avoid putting their students in.

School administrators have spent more than a year figuring out how to satisfy the state's new education requirements while keeping students happy, involved and in school.

The high school must add math and science classes while maintaining its electives and an appropriately sized school day. School officials looked at more than 40 schedules from different high schools before choosing one that fits their needs.

The junior high school examined at least 50 different schedule options, and has yet to find the right one.

Teachers and administrators agree that finding the perfect class schedule means catering to the needs of all students. But first they must determine what really is in the best interest of students.

Moscow Junior High School Principal Dale Kleinert said students need to be able to explore themselves and their interests.

Moscow High School Principal Bob Celebrezze said students need to be happy and positive about learning and being in school.

Now they just need to translate those ideals into the school day.

The motivation to overhaul school schedules and curriculums stems from a decision at the state level. The Idaho State Board of Education approved increased high school graduation requirements in 2006 that ramped up math and science requirements. Beginning with the class of 2013, students will have to take four credits of lab science and two additional credits of math that must be taken during their senior year.

They also will have to take the SAT, ACT or Compass test by their junior year and complete a senior project prior to graduation.

Moscow High School administrators began working a year and a half ago on ways to incorporate increased requirements while maintaining other class offerings.

The high school operates on a six-period floater schedule, which it has maintained since 1993. Five classes meet each day for 71 minutes, with a sixth period floating through the schedule.

Celebrezze said he believes one important measure of student success is happiness, and he believes students are happy with the schedule they have.

On the other hand, students only take six classes per semester and sometimes struggle to fit requirements in with electives like band, foreign languages and art classes. The high school offers a zero-hour class to compensate, which requires students to be in class by 7:04 a.m. and extends the school day to about eight hours.

Senior Meredith Stone said the only way she could stay in choir was to add a class during zero hour.

"I've been fortunate," Stone said. "I haven't had to sacrifice any electives because I've taken zero hour."

Powell also is in a zero-hour class to fit everything in, even after dropping band.

She's willing to be at school early if it means she can keep taking electives.

"(Electives) make your days a lot more enjoyable," Powell said. "Last year I looked forward to French, band and art so much."

She'll be heading to college next year, and plans to study art history and criticism - a subject she had no interest in until taking an art elective at Moscow High School.

One popular criticism of the upcoming change in graduation requirements is the focus on college-bound students. As schools try to fit in these new requirements, they also are trying to serve the needs of students who won't seek higher education.

Offering a wide selection of electives is one way to do that.

Tom Garrett, who teaches music at the junior high school and high school, said he was hoping a new schedule would lengthen class times and add more elective options.

In the end, Celebrezze recommended retaining the high school's current schedule and dropping one year of U.S. history to make room for the additional math and science credits.

"We'll see what happens," Garrett said. "I'm not convinced that that's what's best for kids."

Garrett said students need well-rounded educations, and life is not just about math and science.

"There are going to be students that the only reason they're in school is because they're able to take these kinds of classes," he said, referring to electives.

The junior high school is overhauling its schedule for entirely different reasons, but will have many of the same considerations. The two schedules need to be cohesive because ninth-graders are housed at the junior high school, but must meet high school requirements.

Kleinert said the biggest reason to revamp the junior high school schedule is reducing the burden on students. They currently have a seven-period schedule where each class meets for 49 minutes each day.

Teachers, administrators and students agree the schedule is not working.

Kleinert and Assistant Principal Kevin Hill had teachers complete a survey ranking different class schedules, and the current schedule finished dead last. Kleinert and Hill realized that seven periods worth of homework in a day was too much, especially for students with demanding electives and extracurricular activities.

Ninth-grader Grace McGuire sometimes has more than two hours of homework to do at night, a burden that only gets worse on nights when she has sports.

"It's like overload," she said, adding that she sometimes doesn't get home from a game until close to midnight and has to wake up at 4:30 a.m. to finish her homework.

Teachers and administrators are adamant about the need to decrease the number of classes students have in a day, but don't want to limit any opportunities to take the classes they want.

"When we started looking at reduced classes for kids we had 85 percent of kids with a full schedule and 15 percent with conflicts," Kleinert said. "If you have any conflicts, that's too many."

He said students need to be able to explore subjects and figure out what they like.

"Sometimes that translates into career selections," Kleinert said.

The junior high school does not yet have a preferred class schedule to recommend to the school board for approval, but the scheduling committee is leaning toward two options. The first is a seven-period floater similar to what the high school currently uses.

Under the second option, students would have all seven 50-minute classes on Mondays and Fridays and would rotate through five 72-minute periods on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

Garrett was on both school's committees, and is relieved to see the process drawing to a close.

Kleinert and Hill hope to be able to recommend a new schedule to the school board sometime in the next few weeks. The board will vote on the recommendations, and both schedules are slated to go into effect next fall.

"This has been a very long, drawn-out process, and there's been a lot of blood, sweat and tears for all the committee members to come up with what's going to work for both Moscow High School and the junior high," Garrett said. "We don't know if what we will have will be the perfect solution, but we want one that works best for students."

n October 2004 - Plans for increased high school graduation requirements are first discussed.

November 2006 - The Idaho State Board of Education approves a new set of high school graduation requirements for the class of 2013 and beyond, including increased math and science requirements, a senior project and requiring students to take a college entrance exam in their junior year of high school.

Spring 2007 - Moscow High School administrators begin looking at a class schedule redesign.

November 2007 - Moscow Junior High School administrators and teachers begin looking at new scheduling options to better meet students' needs and fit in with possible curriculum and schedule revisions at Moscow High School.

October 2008 - The high school "redesign committee" presented its recommendations for implementing the new requirements to parents and school board members. Parents and teachers were not impressed by the high school's proposed decrease in social studies requirements.

December 2008 - The Moscow School Board will vote on Moscow High School Principal Bob Celebrezze's recommendations for compliance with the new graduation requirements; Moscow Junior High School Principal Dale Kleinert hopes to make his recommendations for a revised junior high school class schedule.

September 2009 - Moscow Junior High School is expected to implement its revised class schedule; The graduating class of 2013 enters ninth grade and is the first class to face the ramped-up requirements.

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FROM THE LEWISTON TRIBUNE (PASSWORD REQUIRED)

East meets West at LHS

LCSC students share Japanese culture with Lewiston high schoolers

By Kerri Sandaine

Saturday, December 6, 2008

Mai Tsujimoto (center) talks with Lewiston High School students about her life and experiences in high school in Japan.

In Japan, high school students are not allowed to have pierced ears, dyed hair, a driver's license or a part-time job.

That came as a surprise to some Lewiston High School kids studying Japanese culture this week.

"People here have lip rings, piercings and lots of different hair colors, said Breanne Kiely, 16. "They have a lot of rules."

Kiely and other Lewiston students learned about Japanese customs during a cultural immersion project spearheaded by teacher Mary Jackson, who spent three weeks in Japan last June through the Japanese Fulbright Memorial Fund.

About 1,700 educators applied for the program, but only 320 were selected. Jackson, who teaches Spanish, went with 160 other teachers from all 50 states, and another group went in September.

She shared her experience with students and invited several Japanese students attending Lewis-Clark State College to talk about life in Japan.

"I thought it would be a fun thing for kids in Lewiston, Idaho," Jackson said. "They don't get to travel much and this is a good way for them to be exposed to a different culture."

The Japanese college students told the kids they had to wear uniforms in high school, bring their own lunch and use public transportation or ride a bike because there aren't any school buses. About 95 percent of Japanese students go to high school, which requires an entrance exam, and 50 percent go to college, they said.

One of the games they taught the class involved dropping Japanese coins into a cup submerged in a bucket of water. The activity is called "ichiyen dama otosni," said Naomi Otsuki, 21, who is studying early childhood development. Origami, calligraphy and card games were going on at other tables.

"I didn't expect them to be so interested in Japan," Otsuki said. "They were so excited to see their names in Japanese."

Earlier in the week, Lewiston students participated in a scavenger hunt featuring Japanese items, card making, and after-school clubs. The choir learned the Japanese national anthem and chopsticks were used in the lunch room.

"The language is really interesting," said Breanna Wakefield, 16. "Another thing that interested me is how they wear slippers instead of shoes in the classroom."

Mai Tsujimoto, 24, of Kobe, Japan, said the No. 1 question she was asked during her visits to the school is why she chose Lewiston for her college experience.

"I wanted to come to a small town so I could practice my English," said Tsujimoto, who is studying biology.

"I really like interacting with the community like this. It's a really great opportunity to share our culture. I teach a Japanese cooking class at the YWCA and I'm finding a lot of fun doing that. These are wonderful experiences."

Sandaine may be contacted at kerris@lmtribune.com or (208) 848-2264.

In the schools

Monday, December 8, 2008

School board honors
McGhee teacher

The Lewiston School Board will recognize Jill Schmidt, a third-grade teacher at McGhee Elementary, who is an Idaho state finalist for the 2009 Presidential Award For Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching, tonight during its regular meeting.

Other agenda items include review of three early graduation applications from Tammany Alternative High School, discussion of bids for office supplies and brick and masonry materials for the McSorley Elementary School construction project and a recommendation to purchase a mower. The meeting begins at 7 p.m. at the district office, 3317 12th St.

In addition, Dana Stedman, principal of Camelot Elementary School and teachers Sally Gabby, Leitha Spencer and Janene Connerly will discuss effective organizational methods for students at the meeting. A demonstration will be presented by second-grade students Megan Light and Treyce Bradley, and fifth-grade students Britton Sager and Kylie Bowden.

School improvement
plans to be presented

Grantham and Heights elementary schools will present school improvement plans during the regular Clarkston School Board meeting today at 6 p.m. at 1294 Chestnut St.

Also on the agenda is Scott Dolezal, who will talk to the board about "data dashboards," Superintendent Pete Lewis said. The goal is to share budget and assessment information in a manner that provides a quick visual reference that's easy to understand, Lewis said.

Discussion items include attendance at the annual board workshop in Dayton, where the Washington State Teacher of the Year will speak, and board members from southeastern Washington will be updated on legislative issues.

Action will be taken to award the diesel fuel bid. A report on the fiscal software conversion from the Educational Service District and business department rounds out the schedule.

LHS music students
selling holiday fruit

Lewiston High School's music department is selling oranges and grapefruit again this year for its annual fundraiser. Orders will be taken through Wednesday.

Orders can be placed by calling the music department at (208) 748-3138. The fruit is available in 20-pound boxes or 10-pound bags of each or a mix of both oranges and grapefruit, for \$22 and \$11, respectively. Fruit will be available for pickup from 9 to 4 p.m. Dec. 20-21 at the Lewiston Center Mall. Delivery is also available.

Clarkston schools
give winter concerts

The following winter concerts will be presented by Clarkston schools:

Lincoln Middle School, 7 p.m. today, Clarkston High School auditorium.

Highland Elementary second-graders, 2 and 7 p.m. Tuesday, Highland gym.

Parkway Elementary second-graders, 7 p.m. Wednesday, CHS auditorium.

Heights Elementary fourth- and fifth-graders, 7 p.m. Thursday, CHS auditorium.

Indian Education
Program is topic

The Lewiston School District will hold a parent meeting about the Indian Education Program at 7 p.m. Wednesday in the Sacajawea Junior High School library.

Families invited to
make holiday crafts

Two Clarkston schools will present workshops for making holiday crafts this week.

The workshop at Highland Elementary School will be from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Wednesday in the school gym. At Parkway Elementary, the workshop will be from 3 to 5 p.m. Thursday in its gym.

Craft supplies will be supplied for the workshops. There will be 6 to 10 stations for each session and families may come and make as many crafts as they'd like.

Juliaetta students have
Christmas program

JULIAETTA - The students of Juliaetta Elementary School will present their annual Christmas program at 1:30 p.m. Friday in the school gym.

Christmas songs will be performed by the sixth-grade band, the elementary choir, and kindergarten through fourth-grade classes. Fifth- and sixth-graders will present the new Christmas musical, "North Pole Radio Hour."

Lewiston students
place in card contest

Two Lewiston students placed second and third in the Idaho Department of Education's annual holiday card contest.

Krysta Kilmer, a sixth-grader at Webster Elementary School, finished second, and Michael Murphy, a fifth-grader at Centennial Elementary was third. Both also won their grade-level competition.

Other area students also won their grade-level top prize: Kindergarten - Keaton Danielle Bascom, Orchards Elementary; third grade, Hailey Russell, Grangeville Elementary.

First place was won by Brielle MacDonald, a fourth-grader at Falcon Ridge Public Charter School in Kuna.

Geography Bee
begins this week

Lewiston elementary schools will begin the National Geographic's Geography Bee this week and next with competitions at each school. Winners at each school will advance to the next level, a written examination to determine state competitors.

The Lewiston competitions will be as follows: Centennial, 1:30 p.m. Friday; Camelot, 9:15 a.m. next Monday; Webster, 9:30 p.m. Dec. 16; McSorley, 1 p.m. Dec. 16; Orchards, 10:15 a.m. Dec. 17; McGhee, 1:45 p.m. Dec. 17; Whitman, 9:30 a.m. Dec. 19.

Students selected for
All-State Band and Choir

Fifteen eighth-graders from Clarkston's Lincoln Middle School have been selected to perform as part of the Eastern Washington Junior All-State Band and Choir.

Students from LMS chosen for the All-State Band are Roslynn VanSickle and RaeAnn VanSickle.

Students selected for the All-State Choir are: Rebecca Ball, Jesse Chandler, Alisha DeLane, Robbie DeVleming, Devyn Haynes, Judi Key, Sarah Patten, Rachel Reilly, Kari Scharnhorst, McKenna Swearingen, Becci Tank, Damian Thornton and Sarah West.

Students were selected through auditions and will join more than 100 students from throughout the region to perform in Spokane in March.

Why pay parents to keep kids from school? (Editorial)

Jim Fisher

Monday, December 8, 2008

State Rep. Steven Thayne never says die in his crusade to keep Idaho's children home with their mothers, and out of public schools. The chairman of the former task force that suggested making divorce harder to get and restraining orders easier on brutish men now proposes paying parents to keep kindergarten-age kids at home.

Under Thayn's idea, which he says he will introduce in the legislative session beginning in a few weeks, half the money the state spends on kindergarten for each child, \$4,500, would be paid to parents who want to prepare their children for first grade themselves. A quarter would go to the parents' school district, and a quarter would go to the state's rainy-day fund for schools.

Thayn, R-Emmett, says parents would not get their share of the money if their children did not arrive at school the next year ready for first grade. He said his bill is intended to encourage more parental involvement in education.

"The reason for the proposal is generally the students that do best in school have good parent support," Thayn tells the Twin Falls Times-News. "What I'm trying to establish is a pattern of parental involvement at an early age."

Good for him for that. But his proposal raises just a few questions.

First, as long as kindergarten is voluntary in Idaho, why should the state pay anyone who chooses not to enroll offspring in it? Shouldn't the public school budget be used for those who are in public schools, not those who choose not to be?

Next, if parents will be paid only if their children prove to be prepared for first grade, does that mean payment won't take place until after one's child begins first grade?

And about that proof, will the state or individual school districts be responsible for assessing whether children have received the proper preparation? Will it be done by test? If so, who will write and conduct the test, and how will it be financed?

Finally, considering Rep. Thayn's record as a legislator, what confidence can Idahoans have that this proposal is aimed more at strengthening early education than weakening it? Thayn, after all, is among those legislators who oppose prekindergarten education, now being used in other countries and even other states to make their young people more competitive in a global market.

Last year, Thayn was among the sponsors of a House resolution that said state-financed prekindergarten programs "represent an investment in more bureaucracy at the expense of the family." From this corner, his latest proposal appears to represent an investment in more bureaucracy at the expense of public education. - J.F.

FROM THE IDAHO-PRESS TRIBUNE, NAMPA

Whittenberger Foundation gives more than \$270,000

Jon Meyer

jmeyer@idahopress.com Friday, December 5th, 2008 CALDWELL — The Whittenberger Foundation of Caldwell distributed more than \$270,000 in donations to 60 local charitable and educational groups Friday.

Established by the last will and testament of community leader Ethel Whittenberger, the foundation

is responsible for more than \$7 million in awards since 1973. Many of the annual donations focus on the well-being of children and the family.

Whittenberger donation recipients:

The College of Idaho: \$45,000 Northwest Children's Home: \$20,000 Treasure Valley YMCA: \$8,154 Caldwell Fine Arts, Inc.: \$8,000 Advocates Against Family Violence: \$6,000 Girls on the Run Idaho: \$6,000 Valley Crisis Center: \$6,000 Assistance League of Boise: \$5,000 Canyon County Drug Court: \$5,000 Children's Home Society of Idaho: \$5,000 Discovery Center of Idaho: \$5,000 Girl Scouts of Silver Sage Council: \$5,000 Idaho Public Television/Friends of Idaho Public Television: \$5,000 Idaho State University Foundation: \$5,000 McCall Outdoor Science School: \$5,000 The Center For the Arts: \$5,000 United Way of Treasure Valley: \$5,000 Payette Lakes Ski Club: \$4,821 National Inventors Hall of Fame Foundation Inc.: \$4,800 Idaho Human Rights Education Center: \$4,500 Planned Parenthood of Idaho: \$4,170 Boise WaterShed Exhibits, Inc.: \$4,000 Caldwell Christian Church: \$4,000 Idaho Humanities Council: \$4,000 McCall-Donnelly Education Foundation: \$4,000 Terry Reilly Health Services: \$4,000 The Idaho Foodbank: \$4,000 Treasure Valley Christian Center: \$4,000 Jesse Tree of Idaho: \$3,500 Mercy Housing Idaho Inc.: \$3,500 Vallivue School District No. 139 Lakevue Elementary School: \$3,500 Ride for Joy Therapeutic Riding Program Inc.: \$3,386 Boise Urban Garden School: \$3,000 Homedale School District No. 370 Homedale Elementary School: \$3,000 Idaho Youth Ranch: \$3,000 Junior League of Boise, Idaho, Inc.: \$3,000 Learning Lab Inc.: \$3,000 Special Olympics Idaho, Inc.: \$3,000 The Peregrine Fund: \$3,000 Vallivue School District No. 139 Gifted/Talented Program: \$3,000 Vallivue School District No. 139 Vallivue Middle School: \$3,000 Awesome: \$2,500 Boise Art Museum: \$2,500 Junior Achievement of Idaho, Inc.: \$2,500 Opera Idaho, Inc.: \$2,500 The Salvation Army Boise: \$2,500 Ballet Idaho, Inc.: \$2,000 Boise Philharmonic Association, Inc.: \$2,000 Caldwell Police DARE/PAL Idaho Youth Games: \$2,000 Encore Theatre Company, ETC: \$2,000 Garden City Library Foundation: \$2,000 The Salvation Army Nampa: \$2,000 Nampa Civic Center: \$1,950 Muscular Dystrophy Association of Idaho: \$1,600 Notus Public Library: \$1,500 Idaho Shakespeare Festival: \$1,000 Middleton Public Library: \$1,000 Soroptimist International of Boise: \$1,000 The Salvation Army Caldwell Corps: \$1,000 Third District CASA Program: \$1,000 Homedale Public Library: \$200

"We try to make a better environment for our youth and children, to be stewards of the money the best we can so it reaches and helps the most people," foundation board member Coralie Weston said.

Foundation board members doled out checks amid heavy applause at the annual luncheon. The largest donation of \$45,000 went to The College of Idaho to fund the Whittenberger Scholars program through 2009.

"This year there are 39 students. They are all very deserving, low-income with high GPAs," Share Maack, C of I's director of foundation and corporate relations, said. "It's specified to help those in pre-med and education."

With many organizations dealing with tough financial times, the foundation received applications this year seeking more than \$700,000.

"It made it difficult to choose," Weston said. "Everyone has such a great cause."

Ethel and her husband, Dr. Claude Whittenberger, were longtime residents of Caldwell and were active in civic, educational, religious and cultural affairs.

Officials fight dropout rate

Alisa Angelakis
aangelakis@idahopress.com Sunday, December 7th, 2008 NAMPA — Nampa Mayor Tom Dale is serious about improving Idaho's high school dropout rate.

He wants to hold a summit to address the factors to keep students from graduating.

"The goal is to bring education professionals, city professionals and business professionals together to address this issue and see how we can work together to keep these kids in school," he said.

Summit details

- All-day event, Jan. 30, Nampa Civic Center
- National and local speakers
- Various panels will discuss several at-risk student factors
- Spanish interpreter
- \$15 registration fee includes continental breakfast and lunch
- Scholarships will be available

For more information about the Keeping The Promise Summit, call Sharla Arledge at 468-5411. A link to registration will be added at www.cityofnampa.us when the agenda is finalized.

Dale said his vision came from attending an America's Promise Alliance conference, where he learned about dropout prevention summits that were being held throughout the country. For three

years in a row, America's Promise Alliance has named Nampa one of the 100 best communities for young people. But no summits were being held in Idaho — and Dale wanted to change that.

"The concept was presented that we all have a very large stake in increasing the education level in our population," he said. "Businesses need an educated workforce, education folks really desire to have success in their programs, and the city has a large stake in this as there is a direct correlation between education levels and criminal activity. We need to collaborate and do everything we can to motivate students to stay in school."

Summit in Nampa

The "Keeping The Promise Idaho Summit on Dropout Prevention" has been scheduled for Jan. 30 at the Nampa Civic Center. Organizers say they hope to have the agenda finalized and open registration online soon.

"We're really trying to get the community involved," Sharla Arledge, spokeswoman for the city of Nampa, said. "There is a tremendous cost to society when young people drop out of school. As a community, we need to be thinking about these kids as our kids."

Arledge said a dynamic gathering is planned and will include expert advice from several speakers and panels. She said information will be presented to school administrators and political leaders that will aid them in their decision-making.

Business leaders, service clubs and faith organizations will learn how they can be more involved and help youth be successful. And parents will be taught how to communicate more effectively with their children and with the schools.

"We're hoping maybe even some young people can attend," Arledge said.

Summit purpose

To initiate and strengthen Idaho's efforts to support students at risk of dropping out of school, broaden current strategies in dropout prevention and address issues that drive students to leave school.

FROM THE IDAHO STATESMAN

No new education news stories posted online today.

FROM THE TWIN FALLS TIMES-NEWS

BHS students to trim tree at Zions Bank

Biz Bites

By Joshua Palmer

Students from Burley High School's special education class will create handmade ornaments for Zions Bank's Christmas tree and receive a cash donation for their school in return.

Throughout Idaho, students are participating in the annual "Lights On" tradition by making festive decorations to deck the halls of every Zions Bank office.

Burley High School's special education students will decorate a tree and make ornaments inside Zions Bank's Burley office Dec. 4 at 6:30 p.m.

Zions Bank will present a contribution of \$0.35 per ornament to the school, and participants will then enjoy a visit with Santa and have refreshments. The public is invited to visit the branch and see the decorated tree on display through the holidays.

"It's nice to share the art our children make with the people in the community," said Steve Ormond, manager at Zions Bank's Burley office.

Nampa officials fight drop out rate

NAMPA, Idaho - Nampa Mayor Tom Dale says he wants to improve Idaho's high school dropout rate, so he's holding a summit to address the factors that keep students from graduating.

Last year, more than 2,100 high school students dropped out, according to the Idaho Department of Education.

Dale says the idea for a summit came when he attended an America's Promise Alliance conference, where he learned similar summits are being held throughout the country.

Dale says everyone has a stake in increasing Idaho's education level _ business need an educated work force, and statistics show a direct correlation between education levels and criminal activity.

The summit is scheduled for Jan. 30 at the Nampa Civic Center.

Information from: Idaho Press-Tribune, <http://www.idahopress.com>

A service of the Associated Press(AP)

S. Idaho schools seek looser lottery money limits

POCATELLO, Idaho - The superintendent of the Pocatello-Chubbuck School District wants lawmakers to temporarily remove limitations on how state lottery money is spent on education.

Public schools within the eastern Idaho district receive \$400,000 to \$700,000 a year from the lottery, money the state earmarks for building improvements, said superintendent Mary Vagner.

While the Idaho economy suffers from sluggish tax revenues, Vagner said restrictions on the lottery money could be temporarily lifted to allow public schools to include the funds as part of general operating budgets.

"As (legislators) look for money next year to keep schools going, this is one place they might look, using lottery money differently," Vagner told the Idaho State Journal.

Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter told state agencies Monday to slash 3 percent from budgets, which were already cut by 1 percent in September. Public schools will lose about \$60 million under the plan, a shortfall that will be covered with money from an education reserve fund created by lawmakers.

Democratic Rep. James Ruchti, of Pocatello, said the fund, which held about \$114 million this year, could prove difficult to replenish if the economy doesn't improve.

Temporarily lifting restrictions on the lottery money given to public schools is just one option the Legislature needs to consider during the 2009 session, Ruchti said.

"We've got to think outside the box," he said. "We can't gut the K-12 education system or the higher education system. We need to use those systems to help parents prepare their kids for the future."

More than \$19 million in Idaho lottery money went toward the public education system this year.

Vagner said lawmakers should consider removing restrictions on spending the money only temporarily, putting the funding back toward building improvements after the economy improves.

The idea gained support during a recent conference for school district superintendents in Boise, Vagner said.

"If they are short money for teaching school, then I'd rather have it go toward that than facilities," she said.

Information from: Idaho State Journal, <http://www.journalnet.com>

A service of the Associated Press(AP)

The full-service small school district is fading (Editorial)

If you're old enough to have teenagers, then your recollection of what high school curriculum is supposed to look like is probably very different than your son or daughter's reality. Sure, they still teach history, art, French, Spanish, music and wood- and metalworking in high school, but fewer students have time for those subjects.

That's because of the seven-year-old No Child Left Behind Act, which placed such heavy emphasis on passing standardized achievement tests that science, math and reading now dominate Idaho secondary school curriculums.

And it's only going to get more so.

New state-mandated high school graduation requirements will kick in when freshmen begin school in the fall.

Before those students can graduate in 2013, they must take an additional combined four credits of math and science. That means six credits of math, an increase of two from the existing four-credit requirement, and six credits of science, also an increase from four credits. Two credits can be taken in a school year, so the increases are the equivalent of one extra year each of math and science classes.

The additional science classes must include lab work, too. And students will be required to complete a senior project.

The changes were made to assure all students are involved in meaningful academic classes and better prepared for the work force and education beyond high school, and most larger Idaho school districts are ready for the changes.

Things, however, will be more challenging for smaller school districts that must find the resources to hire additional math and science teachers, the space for science labs and the money to equip them.

So if you're a school district with, say, 1,000 students, maybe you don't offer history, foreign languages, visual or industrial arts or music on the high school level by 2013 because you can't afford to do so anymore.

And that's a problem for high school students planning to go to college.

Some form of No Child Left Behind Act is likely to be renewed by the Democratic-dominated Congress and signed by President Obama next year. It will almost certainly contain more flexible requirements, but they will be requirements nonetheless. Preparation for standardized testing will continue to be a fact of life in Idaho public schools for the foreseeable future.

Leaving small school districts with a dwindling range of good alternatives.

Actually, there will be only one option: Cooperate with other school districts and with institutions such as the College of Southern Idaho to provide classes you can't offer on your own.

If that idea smacks of consolidation - the third rail of small school district politics in Idaho - so be it. The era of all Idaho school districts being everything to everyone is closing fast.

Which means that jarring changes are coming to small Idaho school districts.

Except that this time, the Legislature isn't going to ride to the rescue of districts that choose not to cooperate with each other. There simply aren't enough resources anymore to do that.

Dual-credit programs - those that offer college as well as high school credit - will expand in years to come, but they're not designed to provide elective classes to secondary school students.

School districts themselves have to do that, and they'd better start figuring out how today.

FROM THE IDAHO STATE JOURNAL (PASSWORD REQUIRED)

IMPACTING ISU

Holdbacks may hit 60 adjunct faculty

BY YANN RANAIVO

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POCATELLO — The state's declining economy has placed the future of several temporary professors in doubt, according to Idaho State University officials who addressed faculty during an open forum session in the Bengal Theater on Friday.

Due to a state budget that economists project is facing a 5.9 percent shortfall, ISU officials said they may or may not renew the contracts of about 60 adjunct faculty members next year.

President Arthur Vailas and his aides made the announcements four days after Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter ordered most state agencies to initiate 3 percent holdbacks in addition to 1 percent spending cuts made in September. The governor also told agencies to reserve another 2 percent in case further holdbacks are announced. ISU, previously dispelled fears of faculty layoffs in the midst of a declining state economy, is required to notify staff of potential nonrenewals on employment contracts.

Tenure faculty, though, will not be affected

by the holdbacks, nor would classified and non-classified staff. Classified staff consists of positions such as administrative assistants and groundskeepers while top university administrators make up a portion of nonclassified staff.

These recent details add to an increased scrutiny plan that ISU officials announced during an open forum meeting last month. The scrutiny requires university departments to submit more thorough reviews of their spending plans before drawing funds out of their budgets.

The scrutiny plan further asks department heads and administrations to cut travel costs and possibly leave a number of vacant positions unfilled. ISU has about 70 vacant positions in any given month.

During the open forum meeting in November, ISU presented two additional spending scenarios that prepared the university for a 5 percent and a 7.5 percent holdback. The two scenarios called for greater spending scrutiny.

Top ISU officials, who spent most of this week in Boise, said Monday's holdbacks were bigger than what they had prepared for. They said there is even talk of a possible 10 percent holdback.

But whether or not the economy takes its toll on adjunct faculty, ISU has considered some alternatives for generating additional revenue and saving on operating costs.

Besides state dollars, ISU generates revenue from student tuition, alumni donations, grants, business contracts, philanthropy and university services.

ISU officials mentioned a few of the alternative revenue sources to faculty during the forum.

Some suggestions included lowering the number of general education credit hours required for undergraduates, having academic departments combine certain curricula, increasing the number of online courses, seeking partnerships with other state colleges for degree programs, seeking more funds from the private industry and creating more graduate assistants.

"Some people consider that to be more entrepreneurship," Vailas told faculty. "I consider it being more creative."

Vailas has also urged lawmakers to consider tapping into a portion of the state's more than \$250 million in rainy day funds, which Otter is reserving for fiscal year 2010.

"All this was thrown at us (earlier this week)," Vailas said. "But I am waiting for the rain, if you get my drift."

Although the economy paints a grim picture for temporary professors, the ISU president closed the forum to the sound of applause from a packed auditorium inside the Bengal Theater.

"I think they're trying to do the best they can," said Paul Link, a professor of geosciences. "The picture keeps changing on a state level. So we don't know how bad it's going to be."

However, Link noted the importance of adjunct staff, who he said are mostly in charge of teaching lowerlevel courses and running laboratory sessions in the science departments. He referred to one adjunct faculty in his department.

"If she wasn't here," he said, "then most of us would have to teach all of the freshman labs."

District 25 seeks temporary new use of lottery funds Mary Vagner

School system hopes income can be used for general fund till financial crisis abates

BY CASEY SANTEE
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POCATELLO — School District 25 officials want lawmakers to free up state lottery revenue earmarked for improvements to public school buildings next year so school districts can use the money for their general budgets.

Superintendent Mary Vagner said the district receives between \$400,000 and \$700,000 annually in state allocations stemming from the Idaho lottery, which could help keep schools running in tough economic times.

This year, the lottery pumped more than \$19 million into the public education system.

The district's request comes on the heels of two state budget holdbacks which have cost public schools more than \$60 million since September.

That money was taken from a \$114 million stabilization fund.

"As (legislators) look for money next year to keep schools going, this is one place they might look, using lottery money differently," Vagner said.

When Idaho Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter announced the most recent holdback this week, district officials voiced concern that the state has no way to replenish the dwindling fund.

Rep. James Ruchti, D-Pocatello, said that removing limitations on how Idaho schools use lottery money is just one potential solution the Legislature needs to consider.

He said the situation is becoming dire and that wiping out the stabilization fund is a bad idea, especially given the possibility that Idaho's revenue shortfall could continue for two or three years.

"We've got to think outside the box," Ruchti said. "We can't gut the K-12 education system or the higher education system. We need to use those systems to help parents prepare their kids for the future."

Vagner said freeing up the lottery revenue should be a temporary move and that when the economic crisis has abated, the state should once again earmark it for building improvements. She said the idea was discussed during a recent superintendents' conference in Boise and that many of her colleagues support it.

"If they are short money for teaching school, then I'd rather have it go toward that than facilities," Vagner said. "But I would hope they would (eventually) put it back into facilities."

Highland band rocking out

BY JIMMY HANCOCK
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POCATELLO — When spending 25 hours in a rocking chair during a marathon to raise funds, it's important to have plenty of food, energy drinks and entertainment, said several members of the Highland High School Band.

About 40 members of Highland's band were gathered in the school auditorium Friday night during the first few hours of their Rockathon, an annual fundraiser, during which they spend 25 hours keeping a rocking chair in motion.

"This is a major fundraiser for us," said Jay Ronk, Highland's band conductor and a music teacher at the school. "This is probably the second largest fundraiser we do."

Ronk expected to raise about \$3,500 from the event.

Students were clumped in groups of two to six band members, watching television, listening to music or playing video games as they steadily rocked in their chairs.

This year's fundraiser is going toward the student's trip to Miami next month, during which they will play at the BCS Championship Game at Dolphin Stadium. Ronk found out about his

band's selection to play at the game about a year ago and the band has been raising money ever since.

In total, the band needed to raise \$177,000 for the 97 people — band members and chaperones — who are making the trip. What seemed an uncertainty just two months ago is now practically in the books.

"We still have to raise about \$8,400 through corporate sponsorships, but we'll make it," he said. "There's no way we are getting this close and not going."

Ronk said one former Highland High School Band member, whose name he would not divulge, is single-handedly responsible for raising more than 25 percent of the funds needed to make the trip.

He has personally donated \$42,000 and solicited about \$14,000 from business acquaintances, Ronk said.

"He is really committed to making sure these kids go on this trip," Ronk said of the donor. "He knows it's a once in a lifetime opportunity."

Students compete in Lego robot contest

BY JIMMY HANCOCK
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POCATELLO — Lori Anderson, a teacher at Inkom Elementary School, said involving her students in a Lego robotics competitions is a costly endeavor, but worth the educational value.

"It's an extracurricular activity, but we also do it in class as part of our science work," said Anderson, who teaches a class of fourth- and fifth-graders combined.

Her student were in Idaho State University's Pond Student Union Building on Saturday competing in the 2008 First Lego League regional qualifier.

"We have two teams with 10 members each," Anderson said.

Inkom Elementary's ability to get involved with the competition came through a grant last year from Idaho State University, which sponsors the event. The grant paid for two Lego robot kits and registration for both teams, more than \$1,000 total, she said.

"It can be expensive," Anderson said. "The entry fee paid to First Lego is \$200 per team. The robots themselves are about \$350 each. They can also require a laptop (computer) to program them sometimes."

Lawrence Beaty, an instructor and associate director of the Energy Systems Technology and Education department at ISU, coordinated Saturday's event, which he said featured more than 50 teams from throughout Eastern Idaho and Northern Utah.

"This is the biggest (Lego robotics) competition in Idaho," he said. "We should send about 26 teams to the state competition next month."

Beaty said the goal of First Lego is to inspire kids to be involved with science, engineering, technology and mathematics. Saturday's competition actually involves four different areas, each of which received equal weight toward the final score.

Each team is judged on its technical design, team cooperation, a set of tasks the robot must perform and a research project, the focus of which for this year was the climate.

Using a computerized controller, the teams must preprogram their robot to complete each task and return to its base, requiring the students to do several calculations.

The teams are made of members ranging in age from 9 years to 14 years. Beaty said teams are based in every type of school, including public, private, charter and home-based. He said there are also several teams comprised of kids who simply have the common interest regardless of which school they attend or their age.

Medical Ed effort in Idaho is affordable (Editorial)

Times may be tough, and Idaho State University has already been required to hold back 6 percent of its 2009 budget, but that is no reason not to go forward on its plan to create a medical education program, in the view of President Arthur Vailas.

That's because it won't cost Idaho taxpayers more the state now pays to University of Washington and University of Utah to educate medical students from Idaho, many of whom do not return to the Gem State.

Instead of paying \$48,000 apiece for 20 seats in Seattle and eight at \$34,000 at Salt Lake City, Idaho could instead choose to spend that money in-state. Should it do so, it would still cost medical students about \$22,000 per year in tuition. Without any state support, students would pay \$46,952 in tuition.

How would it be done? By teaching prospective doctors in many of the same classes which other ISU health care students now take, for two years. Then the medical students would move to hospitals and other facilities statewide for clinical instruction and a medical degree. Vailas envisions 60 students per year would be enrolled, until after four years, 240 would be in training.

He told the Idaho State Journal editorial board the decision to go forward with the so-called distributive education plan rests with the State Board of Education, since an interim legislative committee has rendered a positive evaluation. The board would need to sanction the plan, and that could occur as soon as January, though Vailas concedes there is some political opposition.

Vailas is a good salesman. He predicts establishing the medical program would bring huge economic benefits, many in the form of fundraising, research grants and added employment.

"We're going full steam ahead," Vailas says. He says a bridge loan would be required to launch the program, but "all the ingredients are in place for a successful M.D. degree program."

Give ISU credit for candor in giving faculty and staff straight talk about what could happen in regard to state funding.

Some nontenured instructors and lecturers are being told their contracts may not be renewed, at the discretion of deans, and nonacademic staff could get two weeks' notice.

But as of now, no layoffs have been ordered and a tuition increase remains under discussion, with student leaders involved. There is more advising and resources for teachers in the Teaching and Learning Center.

Innovation is encouraged, with more online classes, some cross-teaching, and partnerships with other universities, businesses and even municipalities in the region. "We need to be more efficient, and market our undergraduate and graduate experience," Vailas says.

A news story in The Statesman newspaper relates that graduates of ISU's College of Pharmacy are being signed up by employers a year ahead of graduation at salaries exceeding \$100,000, and all health care graduates, including nurses, are in high demand.

Those factors lend credence to the medical education plan, assuming it gets past the remaining hurdles in time to alleviate the shortage of doctors in the state.

Bear Lake students attend leadership session in Boise

BY TAMMY STEPHENS For the Journal

MONTPELIER — On Nov. 25 Bear Lake High School's leadership students traveled to Boise for the annual Idaho Association of Student Councils Leadership Conference. With almost 1,100 high school students from across the state in attendance, this was one of the largest conferences in recent years.

"This was an experience that you can't find anywhere else. The school spirit and pride among all the schools is outstanding, and yet we all get along as student leaders," said student body President Spencer Smedley, who helped with Bear Lake's workshop on Friday. "We were able to do a breakout session, and it went really well. I think other schools left with some great ideas."

On Thursday evening the students dressed in their best and attended the opening session and banquet at the Boise Convention Center. Senior Emily Transtrum opened the session with a solo of the national anthem. Then the student leaders listened to Sen. Kate Kelly welcome them to the conference. They also listened to keynote speaker Josh Sundquist as he explained that life is difficult but it is also beautiful; it all depends on how one deals with both the trials and the triumphs.

"Josh Sundquist was an amazing speaker who really touched us with his message," said freshman officer Johnny Wells. "It was fantastic and I learned a lot. He made it easier to understand how we can make the best of terrible situations."

Friday morning began with a presentation of the Outstanding Student Council Awards. To earn this award, student councils must complete a variety of projects in leadership, health and safety, community service, and so forth, and complete paperwork that shows how each project was completed. Out of all the high schools across the state, only 10 schools earned this award, and Bear Lake was one of them.

Friday was also filled with another session by Sundquist, a regional meeting, and three different sessions of workshops put on by the different schools. The sessions ranged from sharing of ideas to how to be a leader and how to use technology to increase productivity in a school's leaders.

"The sessions were really productive, and introduced many new ideas to help us to be better leaders in our schools," said sophomore president Tanner Jensen. "I really feel like I gained a lot and have a lot of great ideas to help make our school better and even more fun."

Friday night was the annual dance and games which allowed the students to get to know one another better. Saturday morning was the closing session and magician Kip Sherry both entertained and taught some leadership lessons. Student then boarded the bus to head back home.

"I'm really going to miss this great experience," said student body vice-president, who just attended her fourth conference. "Throughout the years I have learned many life lessons and made many life-long friends from attending this conference."

Those who attended included Spencer Smedley, Tess Rasmussen, Jessi Timothy, Trenidy Thomas, Emily Transtrum, Natalie Tippetts, Alexis Crane, Angelia Bills, Tyrel Skinner, Beverly

Wertz, T.J. Thomas, Arnica Phillips, Jordan Rasmusson, Daniel Wallentine, Chantaya Cada, Tanner Jensen, Seth Roberts, Amelia Crane, Trichell Schwab, Kate Harris, Erica Hayes, Shayna Cochran, Shanelle Hemmert, Johnny Wells and Tyler Hammond. Chaperones were Alan Schwab and John Homer.

Kindergarten teaching plan

State Rep. Steve Thayn, an Emmett Republican and House Education Committee member, wants to pay parents to teach their own kindergarten-age children at home.

He would take the \$4,500 per student state funding from schools, and give half the cash to parents, one-fourth to school districts and a fourth to a fund that shores up education during tough economic times.

Parents would be eligible for the reimbursements if their kids were able to pass a test showing they were ready for first grade.

Trouble is, school districts still would have to pay kindergarten teachers and the costs of a building if some students stayed at home for schooling. And some lawmakers think Thayn's proposal could open the door to cheating, with parents collecting a check from the state while depositing their kids in day care. And what happens to those kids who don't pass Thayn's required test?

One suspects Thayn is more interested in keeping the kids at home where they would have more parental involvement. Last year he led a six-member House task force that recommended Idaho pass a "covenant marriage" law to make divorce more difficult and to encourage premarital counseling. House Speaker Lawrence Denney quashed the interim committee's proposals.

Thayn plans to introduce his parent-pay idea in the 2009 Legislature. It deserves an airing, what with all the questions it raises.

FROM THE IDAHO FALLS POST REGISTER (PASSWORD REQUIRED)

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